An Intonational Analysis of Some Ostensible Speech Acts in Iraqi Arabic

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Abstract

The present paper has been set up to investigate the phenomenon of ostensible speech acts in Iraqi Arabic(hence forth) depending on intonational perspectives. It aims at identifying the different intonational patterns associated to some ostensible speech acts in IA.The data of the study were tape recorded IA everyday life conversations gathered from different situations. The utterances obtained were categorized as serious and non-serious ones. An attempt was made then to provide a comprehensive description of the intonational forms associated to each utterance. The results indicated that IA speakers can be distinguished according to the degree of formality of speech acts and depending on the intonational forms they adopt .These findings predict the hypotheses of the study as to the variety of tones used.

الخلاصة

تم اعداد هذا البحث لتقصي ظاهرة أفعال القول غير الجدية بالاعتماد على منظورات تنغيمية. يهدف البحث الى التعرف على الانماط التنغيمية المختلفة والمقترنة ببعض افعال القول قيد الدراسة والمستخدمة من قبل المتحدثين للهجة العراقية. كانت البيانات المعتمدة في الدراسة عبارة عن تعابير جمعت من مواقف مختلفة للحياة اليومية. تم تصنيف التعابير الى جدية و غير جدية ومن ثم محاولة القيام بوصف شامل للأنماط التنغيمية لكل منها. اشارت نتائج البحث الى ان متحدثي اللهجة العراقية يمكن تمييزهم كناطقين لافعال قول جدية او غير جدية من خلال الانماط التنغيمية المستخدمة مما يؤكد فرضيات الدراسة.

KEY TO PHONETIC SYMBOLS IN MSA

A. Symbols of Arabic Consonant Phonemes

1. Fricatives

/f / a voiceless labio- dental fricative as in /faraħ/ 'happiness'
/θ / a voiceless inter – dental fricative as in /θaabit / 'stable'
/ ð/ a voiced inter – dental fricative as in /ðahab / ' gold '
/ð/a voiced inter-dental velarized fricative as in/ ðalaam / 'darkness'
/ s/ a voiceless alveolar fricative as in /salaam / 'peace'
/ s / a voiceless alveolar velarized fricative as in /sabr /'patience'
/ z / a voiced alveolar fricative as in /ziyaara / 'visit'
/ ʃ / a voiceless post – alveolar fricative as in /ʃiɛr/ 'poetry'
/γ / a voiced uvular fricative as in /γariib / 'stranger '
/ x /a voiceless uvular fricative as in / xawf / 'fear'
/ ħ / a voiceless pharyngeal fricative as in /ħarf / 'letter'
/ ɛ / a voiced pharyngeal fricative as in /ɛiraaq / 'Iraq'
/ h / a voiceless glottal fricative as in /hawaa? / 'air'
/r / a voiced alveolar trill as in /rabiiɛ / 'spring'

2. Stops

/ b / a voiced bilabial stop as in /bayt / ' house '
/ t / a voiceless alveolar stop as in /tiin/ 'fig '
/ t / a voiceless alveolar velarized stop as in / tawiil / ' long'
/ d / a voiced alveolar stop as in /diin / 'religion'
/ d / a voiced alveolar velarized stop as in /daw? / 'light'
/ k / a voiceless velar stop as in / kitaab / ' book'
/ q / a voiceless uvular stop as in / qamar / 'moon'
/ ? / a voiceless glottal stop as in /?ant / ' you'

3. Affricates

/ j / a voiced post-aleveolar affricate as in /jaar / 'neighbour'

4. Nasals

/ m / a voiced bilabial nasal as in /malik / ' king '
/ n / a voiced aleveolar nasal as in / nawm / ' sleep '

5. Lateral

/ l / a voiced alveolar lateral as in /laamiɛ / 'bright'

6. Approximants

/ w / a voiced labio –velar approximant as in /ward / ' flower '
/ y / a voiced palatal approximant as in / yawm/ ' day'

7.Geminate Sounds and Long Consonants
These sounds are transcribed by repeating the consonant symbol e.g.
/fakkara/ ‘he thought’
/saa?iq/ ‘driver ’
B. Symbols of Arabic Vowel Phonemes
/ a / short half open front unrounded as in / ɛalam / ‘flag’
/ aa / long open back unrounded as in / salaam / ‘ peace’
/i/ short close front spread as in /qaa?id / ‘leader
/ ii / long close front spread as in / fiil / ‘ elephant ‘
/ u /short close back rounded as in /?um / ‘mother ’
/ uu / long close back rounded as in / ɛuluum/ ‘ sciences
/aj/ closing front diphthong as in /bajt/ 'house
/aw/ closing back diphthong as in /kawn/ 'universe"

Introduction

Language users normally speak in a continious, connected stream of sounds, syllables and utterurances as well. In most languages, it is occasionally possible to find cases where speakers adopt a single syllable or utterance in isolation with no syllable or utterance preceding or following it .Neither people speak with fixed tone of voice.This may only happen in unusual speech(Roach 2000:150).Therefore, phonology attempts to look at speech as a chain of related units.Thus,our speech involves certain aspects as intonation which is simply defined as the rise and fall of pitch while speaking. These pitch variations are attributed to differences in the vibrations of the vocal cords.Then,they are subject to lead to changes in meaning conveyed and to achieve a number of functions. Amongst these functions is the attitudinal function which is mainly derived from the fact that when we speak we reflect our attitudes by means of adopting many changes in the vocal tracts. This is why, what is uttered is not easily interpreted as serious or not.Therfore,the present paper tries to investigate the role of intonation in the serious-to-non-serious adoption of speech acts in IA.

The problem

Many studies have tackled the phenomenon of speech acts from pragmatic and discoursal perspectives.(Bach and Harnish1979,Grice1975,Leech1983,Levinson1983 and Searle1969).No phonological (intonational) analysis of this phenomenon has been adopted especially with regard to learners' mother tongue (IA).

Aims of the study

The present study attempts to achieve the following:

1-Providing a formal description of the various tones used with IA ostensible speech acts.

2-Investigating the different positions tonic syllables occupy in the tone group.

3-Revealing the tones associated with both serious and non-serious speech acts under study.

Value of the study

The value of the present study stems out from the fact that it is ,perhaps, an early attempt to identify and investigate the intonational patterns of ostensible speech acts.Therefore, it is hoped that this study will fill in the gap of intonational studies of IA in a very much needed area of research of Arabic language.

Hypotheses

The present paper hypothesizes the following:

1-The adoption of specific intonational patterns is determined by attitudinal factors related to the nature of the speech act meant .

2-Speakers of IA adopt various intonational forms when uttering ostensible speech acts.

3-When performing ostensible speech acts, speakers of IA tend to maintain social norms of their culture.

Limits of the study

The present study limits itself to investigate expressive speech acts as categorized by Searle(1979:10-14).Other categories (reprersentatives,declaratives,commissives and directives) are excluded.As for the intonational part,the study expands to deal with both simple and complex tones.The attitudinal function of intonation is being focused rather than other functions.The data of the study are represented by minor rather than major speech functions(as adopted by Halliday 1970:26).*

Procedure of Analysis

In this analysis an attempt is made to investigate the different forms and functions of the intonational patterns associated with ostensible speech acts

in IA.Both simple and complex tones are analyzed. The simple tones are further divided into falling, rising , while complex tones are divided into rising-falling and falling-rising.As for the pause notation,the researcher adopts those indicating finality as proposed by Lieberman(1967:183-186) .The meaning associated with each tone is investigated as well. For ease of typing, the researcher prefers Gimson's(1970) tone symbols. It is worth mentioning that Gimson discusses four types of nuclei which are the falling nucleus(\ ) the rising nucleus (/), the falling-rising (v), and the rising-falling (Λ).

Indirect speech acts

Since the present study is an attempt to investigate those speech acts categorized as indirect ones, it is necessary then to present some knowledge about the characterizing items of this type of speech acts. In short, the normal cases of meaning in the adoption of such type tend to take place in situations where the speaker says an utterance while intending a different meaning (Searle 1975:1).Indirect speech acts are defined as the "cases in which an illocutionary act is performed indirectly by the way of performing another"(ibid:60).They are viewed by Malmkjar (2002:493)as primary illocutionary acts which are illiterally performed.It is believed that indirect speech acts are to be more polite than direct ones.

But in the situations to be analysed this tends to be viewed differently where they are used as less polite.Indirectness goes in parallel with the concept of politeness inclusively. In other words, indirect speech acts constitute in most cases one form of politeness. As a result, the more indirect the speech act is ,the less polite it is interpreted.

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*Miner speech functions do not necessarily have a predication and are mainly represented by reduced sentences.Major speech functions,on the other hand,are expressed by complete sentences.

Famliarities existing among adopters of such speech acts play a significant role in the determination of them in different situations.Therfore,the adoption of indirectness is mainly due to the familiarity which links between the person giving thanks, for example, with the person being thanked.

Data Analysis

Since the speech acts under study belong to expressives, it is necessary to give some knowledge about this category of illocutionary acts.The illocutionary point of expressives is to express the psychological state of the speaker.The experssed psychological state is a wide range of feelings and attitudes. Therefore, an intonational(attitudinal) function of these acts fits to be adopted. The items which follow review the different intonational patterns of the speech acts under study. The following are the full description of the speech acts chosen by the researcher.

1-**Apologies.**

IA has a number of apology utterances used non-seriously by speakers in different situations.Below are the most frequently used types.

1.1 Asfeen /aasfiin/ (so sorry) اسفين

As ostensibly adopted, this expression is normally used to refer to irony when the person uttering it feels unrealistic need due to the nervous mood of the person to whom it is said. In contrast to the serious use where this utterance is then produced with a falling tone, it is said with a rising tone with the second syllable stressed to mean that the speaker feels surprised or non-serious. /a:s<u>fiin</u>/ /

عفواً1.2 Afwan /<u>ɛa</u>fwan/ (sorry)

This utterance has the first syllable stressed and a falling tone is associated with it as :

/ <u>ɛaf</u>wan / \

As ostensibly adopted , this expression has the second syllable stressed. As for the tone, this utterance is produced with a rising-falling tone as:

/ ɛaf<u>wan</u> /

عذراً1.3 Uthran / ɛuðran/ (excuse me)

This utterance is uttered with a falling tone with the first syllable stressed as:

/ <u>ɛuð</u>ran / \

The non-serious use of this utterance is associated with a rising tone stressing the second syllable as :

\ ɛuðran\? /

2. **Greetings.**

IA has various ways of greeting expressions. Such a variety is a time , context and sex-dependent.The following are amongst such greeting expressions with their intonational forms.

2.1 Asalamualaikum.\asalaamuɛalajkum\ (peace be upon you)

السلام عليكم

This expression is mostly used among speakers of IA as the basic Islamic way of greeting. it has a serious one uttered with a falling tone with the sixth syllable stressed as in:

/assalaamuɛaleikum/ \

As an ostensible speech act, it is said with a rising tone with the third and forth syllables stressed as in:

/assalaamuɛaleikum/ /

صباح الخير2.2.Sabahilkher. \sabaaḥilχer\ (good morning)

When meeting in the morning, people adopt this utterance as a greeting expression. As for the tone used it is the complex falling-rising tone with the last syllable stressed as:

/ sabaahilxer / V

As non-seriously adopted expression,the same utterance is said with a rising tone keeping the last syllable stressed as :

/ sabaahixer / /

الله يساعدك2.3.Allaysaadak. \alajsaaɛdak\ (May Allah help you)

This expression is said for an individual person whom is thought to be tired for doing a hard work.As it is seriously used,this expression is uttered with a falling tone with the third syllable sressed as in :

/alajsaaɛdak/ \

When non-seriously used, It is produced with arising-falling tone with the second syllable stressed as in :

/alajsaaɛdak / ^

الله بالخير alaabilxer \2.4. allabilkher. (welcome)
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This expression is normally said as greeting when a person or persons attends a wedding, funeral or any social meeting of men. Here it is said with a falling tone stressing the last syllable as in:
/alaabilxer/ \

Non-seriously, it is said as lamenting utterance to a person for committing bad or unfavorable behavior. Then it will be said with a falling-rising tone with the first two syllables as:
/alaabilxer/ V

مشتاقين2.5.Mishtaqeen. \miʃtaaqiin (We miss you)

As in English and other languages, an utterance like this is said to a person after a long period of absence. As said seriously, it is uttered with a rising tone as:
/mi ʃ taaqiin/ /
but as used non-seriously, it is associated with a falling-rising tone stressing the first and last syllables as:
/miʃtaaqiin/ V

3. **Compliments.**

As for IA speakers, they adopt a number of expressions to achieve such a speech act of surprise, satisfaction or exclamation. The following are the most dominating ones.

الله3.1.Allah! \allaa\ (Oh!God)

It tends to be the dominating compliment expression used by different social classes of IA.It is mostly adopted by females and children to express surprise. Then it is said with a rising tone with the last syllable stressed as in:
/ allaa / /
As an ostensible speech act, it is uttered with a falling tone with the second syllable stressed as in :
/ allaa / \

ياسلام \jaasalaam\ 3.2.Yasalaam! (Oh, dear)

This expression is said with a rising tone with the last syllable stressed as :
/jasalaam/

As non-seriously used, such an expression is uttered with a falling-rising tone with the first and last syllables stressed as:
/jasalaam/ V

شهالحلا3.3. Shhalhalaa! \ʃ halḥalaa (how sweet !)

This utterance is mostly adopted by IA speakers as an expression reflecting an attitude of being fully satisfied when looking at beautiful things or nice people. As for the tone used in this utterance,when used seriously, it is a rising tone with the first syllable stressed as:
/ ʃ halḥalaa/ /

As for the non-serious adoption of this utterance,it is associated with a falling-rising tone with the first syllable stressed as:
/ ʃ halḥalaa/ V

شطالع اليوم3.4.Shtali'ilyoum \ʃtaaliɛiljoom (what a new look !)

Another way of compliment is achieved by means of this expression which is adopted in the case of being fully satisfied with a good appearance or new look of people. Regarding the tone used, this utterance is associated with a falling-rising tone with the first and the last syllables stressed as in :
/ʃ taaliɛiljoom/ V

As for the ostensible adoption of it, this utterance is used to express unsatisfaction and uttered with a rising tone stressing the last syllable as in:
/ʃ taaliɛiljoom/ /

4. **Thankings.**

As seriously adopted, thanking is used in a way which is mostly accompanied with a sense of politness.As far as the non-serious use of this speech act it might be less polite expressions as they may be interpreted as ironic or face-threatening acts. The following are the most frequently adopted thanking expressions among IA speakers.

4.1.barakallabeek.\baarakalaabiik (Allah bless you)
بارك الله بيك

As adopted seriously, such an expression is said with a falling tone having the the first syllable as the tonic one. It tends to be the most dominating thanking expression among IA speakers carrying the highest degree of gratefulness and associated with a high sense of politeness. Then it is uttered with a falling tone stressing the first syllable as in:

/baarakalaabiik/ \

As for the non-serious use of this expression it may be said to blame a person for committing a mistake. In this case it is said with a rising tone with the last syllable stressed as:

/baarakaalabiik/ /

4.2.Shukran\ʃukran (thank you)

شكرا

This is said as a reply to an offer or invitation. As an expression seriously used, it is associated with a falling tone with the first syllable stressed as in:

/ ʃukran/ \

The non-serious implication of this utterance may mean lamenting or sarcasm. Regarding the tone associated with this expression, it is a rising tone with the second syllable stressed as in:

/ ʃukran/ /

تسلم4.3.Tislam \tislam (long live you)

When employed as a direct speech act, this expression is sometimes said as a reply for an invitation, offer or help. When used so, it is uttered with a falling tone with the first syllable stressed as in:

/tislam / \

On the other hand, such an expression is said to a person for committing bad behavior. It might be said as an insult by a father to his child who destroys a dish. When used so, it is said with a rising tone with the second syllable as the tonic as in:

/tislam / /

5. **Congratulations**

IA is rich with the expressions used as congratulations. Such expressions are always said at situations reflecting happiness like birthdays, weddings,

etc.The following are some of these expressions with relevance to their intonational patterns.

مبارك5.1.Mbarak \mbaarak (congratulation)

The serious use of this utterance is associated with a falling tone having the first syllable as the tonic as in:

/<u>mbaa</u>rak/ \

On the other hand, the same utterance is adopted for non-serious intentions to mean blaming, lamenting etc.Then,it is uttered with a rising tone stressing the last syllable as in :

/mbaa<u>rak</u>/ /

بيها الخير5.2.Beehalkher. \biihalxer (congratulations)

This expression is adopted to reflect higher degrees of sincere congratulations. When used so ,it is said with a falling tone with the first syllable stressed as:

/ <u>bi</u>ihalxer / \

On the other hand, when used non-seriously to mean criticism as employed, for example, by a father to his son for losing money, this utterance is said with a rising tone with the last syllable stressed as in:

/ biihal<u>xer</u> / /

شايف5.3.Shayif(alif)kher. \ʃaajifalifxer

الف خير

This utterance is used by speakers whose aim is to convey warm congratulations. A speaker adopting this utterance tries to reflect high degrees of happiness. As employed seriously, it is said with a falling tone with the third and fourth syllables stressed as in:

/ ʃaajif<u>alif</u>xer/ \

The same utterance might be adopted for non-serious aims to convey a type of refusal to show sarcasm. Then it is said with a rising tone stressing the last syllable as in:

/ ʃ aajifalif<u>xer</u>/ /

Conclusions

The present paper arrived at the following conclusions:

1. The intonational patterns associated with the ostensible speech acts tend to be reflections of attitudinal factors related to the nature of the situation and the speech act meant .
2. The adoption of the specific intonational form is mainly determined by nature of the speech act as serious or non-serious.
3. The sense of social norms imposes itself heavily on the employment of non-serious speech acts.

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